

City of Birmingham
Birmingham Shopping District Proceeding
Thursday, October 1, 2020 - 8:30 a.m.
ZOOM Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of the Birmingham Shopping District Board held Thursday, October 1, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. via ZOOM Meetings

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF BOARD

PRESENT: Astrein, Eid, Fehan, Kay, Lundberg, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts, Surnow, Valentine

ABSENT: Hockman, Solomon

ALSO PRESENT: Gerber, Ciura

ADMINISTRATION: Tighe, Brook

2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

David Hoehendorf, Stuart Jeffares, Mike McKenzie

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Motion by Fehan, seconded by Kay to approve the minutes dated September 3, 2020.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 2

4. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Valentine shared that state COVID-19 restrictions are lessening. Movie theaters will be able to re-open very soon, which he said is good news.

The Maple Road project is continuing to move forward but the schedule has been adjusted due to a bit of a delay. There are three phases. The Southfield intersection will be done first followed by East Maple and then West Maple.

5. REPORTS

a. FINANCE REPORT – GERBER

Gerber reported that the balance sheet for August shows that we are still working through some adjustments for the new fiscal year. There was \$50,000 in cash for August. The special assessment from last year was \$53,000. \$36,000 was collected through taxes, which leaves \$17,000 that is still in collections.

The current fund balance is approximately \$719,000. The revenue and expense report shows that we are at 17% of our budget. We have not collected much because events have been canceled, and we still have not added our investment income.

He continued that our expenses show downtown maintenance has used 20% of their projected budget. This is typical for the summer and will level out the rest of the year.

Year to date we are right on track for expenses in the fiscal year of 16.24%.

b. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - TIGHE

Tighe shared that she had extended an offer to Erika Bassett to fill Marianne Gamboa's position. Bassett accepted. She will be working part-time for the City and part-time for the BSD. Bassett comes to the BSD with a prestigious background working for agencies. She has a good feel for municipalities and has done some consulting for police departments. She also lives in Birmingham.

c. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SPECIAL EVENTS - ASTREIN

Astrein reported that we are planning to have another Birmingham Bucks promotion on Small Business Saturday weekend. Individuals will be able to earn \$25 for each \$100 spent with a maximum of \$100 per person. There will also be some giveaways at the corner of Maple and Old Woodward.

We will once again have Santa visits at Santa House however they will be social distanced. Carriage rides have been canceled. The tree lighting will be virtual so that the city does not draw a crowd. Valentine added that we would not announce the date of the tree lighting in advance.

A final decision on Winter Markt will be made at the next special events committee meeting. Brook explained a new holiday tree-decorating contest called "The Great Decorate." This contest will encourage restaurants and retailers to decorate a tree and place it in their front window. The public will vote with their dollars through on-line donations for a winning tree. The donations will go to help Michigan orphans who are aging out of the foster care system. We will share more information on this program at the next merchant meeting.

Brook also updated the board that the farmers market season is now winding down. We have had fifteen to twenty vendors each week and averaged 250-300 cars.

MARKETING & ADVERTISING - POHLOD

Pohlod updated the board that the fall fashion video is now live. There are three versions – different lengths – that will be airing next few weeks. There will also be an insert in SEEN magazine that will be out in mid-October. The committee is also working on a holiday gift guide and will be sending an email to merchants requesting items.

The RFP for the website brought in 36 proposals. The committee interviewed the top four companies. They are analyzing everyone's feedback. They will have a recommendation by the next board meeting.

Fehan asked for a link to the videos. Tighe said that she would send the board a Google link.

MAINTENANCE/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS - QUINTAL

Quintal reported that they ordered holiday planter decorations. The planters will look like last year but with a larger centerpiece. The lights on N. Old Woodward will go up in October.

They updated the snow removal contract to include the additional sidewalk bump-outs. There is an issue with hanging the lights across Merrill Street. It is not clear if we will be able to put them up or not as the building has a new façade and it may be a big expense with additional cables needed.

Astrein inquired about lights on the new trees. Valentine said that we would know more once the trees are planted. Quintal added that he expects them to look like the other trees.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - SURNOW

Surnow shared that there have been issues with getting prospects to come look at spaces due to the COVID situation. The list of prospects has grown over the last 60-days. We are continuing conversations and leaving all prospects on the list because situations are always changing. The Johnny Was grand opening was a great success.

The prospect list shows that those in teal are great prospects. Ciura is actively working to bring companies to town for tours. We had a meeting last week and we talked about ways to collaborate. We are looking into having Instagram influencers support Birmingham.

We will be hosting a virtual broker/owner summit in a couple of weeks. Costar is helpful showing trends. We are continuing to distribute PPE to businesses.

Tighe added that the virtual summit is scheduled for October 21st. Ciura had McKenzie talked about strategy.

Ciura shared that there is tremendous opportunity now for Birmingham. The COVID situation has made downtown areas a focus as people tend to feel safer not being in a mall. Smaller size spaces are currently most popular. She remarked that she has suggested dividing spaces to some property owners.

It is challenging keeping deals warm with the lack of touring. She is continuing to work on keeping people up to date. Perhaps Birmingham had not been viewed as a highlight lately, but now many do not want to go to big malls.

We are continuing to look for not just quality retailers but those who are financially sound. Johnny Was uses a national brokerage team who is now sending us other prospects. We have to stay focused so we can control retailers coming in to the city as best we can.

Ciura continued that she is pleased to have established relationships with building owners. Many of them now call her to let her know if a tenant is leaving. During tough times, building owners can sometimes get nervous and make deals with someone they should not. We strive to control the quality of the retailers.

Valentine asked about the property listing and the nine that are considered serious leads. He wanted to know if they are moving through the process as normal or if there are concerns. Ciura said that the challenge is getting companies to come to town. Many are afraid of the liability and do not want to tour.

Valentine clarified that he is looking for what the concerns or hurdles are like parking or other things. However, it sounds like that is not the issue but more of the regular process.

Ciura responded that she never heard from national retailer that they would not come to Birmingham because of parking. Some have said that rent is an obstacle. Right now smaller sized spaces are the sweet spot. A 3,000 – 4,000 square foot tenant is hard to find. They are primarily small or 5,000 and above.

Tighe added that the BSD has given out approximately 1200 PPE kits to date. The last one was \$16,000 worth of BSD purchased supplies plus some from Oakland County. We are looking into continuing to purchase supplies to distribute.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT

No report given.

d. PARKING REPORT - ASTREIN

Astrein reported that the city would be getting 4G parking meters in the next couple of months. With the structures remaining free through the end of the year, there is a one-time \$100 fee for monthly permit parkers to retain their permit. This is to make sure that the city knows who intends to keep their spot.

e. CHAMBER REPORT - BAUMAN

There was no report from the Chamber.

f. COMMUNITY HOUSE REPORT

There was no report from The Community House.

6. APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

MOTION: Motion by Quintal, seconded by Surnow to approve the vouchers, as submitted, dated October 1, 2020.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 2

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Agreements for Santa Claus performances 2020

Tighe let the board know that the two performance agreements have had a clause added to address the current COVID-19 situation.

MOTION: Motion by Fehan, seconded by Valentine to approve the Santa Claus agreements with Randy Lee and Daniel Suttikus for Santa Claus performances during the 2020 holiday season, conditional upon receipt of signatures and insurance from respective performers.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 2

b. Request to Extend Snow Removal Agreement

Tighe shared that the contract had a provision to extend for 1-year. The extension includes an increase in scope to include the new bump-outs in the sidewalk.

Valentine commented that a supplemental scope of work should be included. He said that it would make sense to be more specific about exactly what additional work is expected for the additional \$5,000. He suggested bringing this back next month with more detail.

9. INFORMATION

a. Retail Activity

b. Announcements

c. Letters, Board Attendance & Monthly Meeting Schedule

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

11. ADJOURNMENT – 9:20 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jaimi Brook (back-up notes on file)